



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**



**U.S. Customs and
Border Protection**

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Press Release

U.S. AND INDIA SIGN PACT TO IMPROVE TRADE AND FIGHT CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Homeland Security today announced that the United States has signed an agreement with the government of India that is designed to assist the two nations in preventing, investigating, and suppressing Customs offenses.

The agreement, a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (CMAA), will allow two Homeland Security agencies, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), to exchange information, intelligence, and other data with India in order to enhance the enforcement of Customs laws.

The Honorable U. S. Ambassador to New Delhi, Dr. David C. Mulford, and the Chairman of the Central Board of Excise & Customs, Mr. Shri Ajay Kumar Singh, signed the English and Hindi language versions of the Document in a signing ceremony in New Delhi, India, on December 15, 2004.

"This agreement will allow our nations to strengthen ties in the law enforcement and trade arenas. It helps ensure that international borders do not serve as barriers to the effective enforcement of Customs laws. The CMAA also provides the framework for U.S. and Indian law enforcement to work together on issues affecting the security of both nations," said Michael J. Garcia, the Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

"International trade and criminal activity are both increasing rapidly. It is critical that Customs agencies around the world share information in order to secure global trade routes and improve the flow of trade," said U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Robert C. Bonner. "Everyone wins when we establish consistent standards to promote international trade and thwart criminal activity. The signing of this Mutual Agreement recognizes an excellent existing working relationship and further acknowledges India as a strong, strategic partner."

This agreement provides a basis for cooperation and investigation in the areas of commercial fraud, smuggling and export controls and related security. The CMAA will be mutually beneficial to the U.S. and India by enhancing their abilities to enforce Customs laws. U.S. domestic laws, and most foreign national laws, do not permit disclosure of much information in the absence of a formal agreement or treaty.

As of today, 55 agreements have been signed between Homeland Security entities and other countries.

##DHS##